10: Schumacher--226 T-1 (ca. 1896) 1898 Formosans
771, 115

Both Chinese and Japanese priests following the field armies have unanimously assured me, after long questioning, that the Tschin-Huan have continued to be Brahmans until this very day...

596 771 The extended family was in itself a religious group. Worship of common ancestors, observation of their birthdays, and participation in annual festivals were ceremonies observed by all members of the family. Religious practices served to impress family members with a feeling of kinship and common heritage.

596 871 The education of children became the function of an extended family when there were no public schools. Tutors were invited to join the family and all the children studied at common expense, regardless of their parents' status within the family. All the children had an equal opportunity to learn.

596 The family was also an economic unit. Male adults participated in the family business and the entire family shared a common budget. In rural families, rice paddies were hulled and cloth was woven by women in the home. Chickens, ducks, vegetables, and preserves were produced in the household, thus making it unnecessary to buy more than a few necessities at the market. In this manner, the family functioned as a unit of production and consumption. Another feature pertaining to the extended family was the system of community property. Family property belonged to the entire family, and at the dispersion of the family it was divided among the sons, with a relatively larger share going to the eldest son, who assumed responsibility for maintenance of the family shrine.

796 perilous voyage from the Mainland across the stormy waters of the Formosan strait. Kuan-yin, the goddess of mercy, offered protection to those building settlements in a primitive and often hostile land. The Land God is also remembered, since Formosa is primarly a land of farms. These ceremonies include street processions, music, dancing, religious dramas, and feasts.

F. Folk Beliefs

• 797 In an agrarian society, folk beliefs are always naive and superstitious. When ways of life change, folk beliefs undergo transformation, for folk beliefs are but reflections of reality. In the present century, when science and technology had begun to modify the conditions of life of the Formosan people, folk beliefs altered. Infant mortality was once a serious concern on the island, and the gods who protected children were propitiated. The dragon who regulated the amount of rainfall received offereings from people in rural districts. After irrigation canals were constructed it was no longer necessary for farmers to seek the favor of a

771 rain-making god.[7] In 1903, Formosa had 3,662 temples consecrated to the dragon god; only one remains today.

In 1715, grasshoppers destroyed crops in the district of Fenshan. Soon after, a temple was erected to appease and honor the god of the grasshopper. For over two hundred years, farmers went to the temple before each harvest to make offerings and invoke the mercy of the god. Only now that the use of insecticides has become widespread has the temple been torn down. Similarly, vaccination has dethroned the god of smallpox. The same fate befalls the gods who look after mothers and children as modern medicine minimizes the dangers of childbirth and lowers the rate of infant mortality.

Folk beliefs in Formosa were fostered in rural areas; with increasing industrialization and urbanization, folk beliefs lose their

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7. In 1902, only 23 per cent of the cultivated land on Formosa was irrigated by a system of canals. In 1942, approximately 64 per cent of the farmland was under irrigation.

771 power to determine the customs of the people.

G. Superstitions and Taboo

784 In spite of the enormous strides made by education in the past three decades, many superstitions and prejudices persist among the Formosan people. They often take the form of taboo or premonitions.

Some uneducated Formosans believe that if a person stumbles on the threshhold of his home just before commencing a journey, danger awaits him en route. To choke while eating presages bad luck. An itching ear is a sign that others are talking about us. The crowing of a rooster at night is a bad omen. Illness and misfortune are punishments sent by angry gods who demand propitiation. An earthquake is caused by the restlessness of a sleeping bull. The dead, especially those who have drowned, are objects of fear. People who waste rice may be struck by lightning.

[826] The aborigines have their own superstitions and taboos. Twins and crippled babies are misfortunes to a family and are allowed to die at birth. Intermarriage among members of the same clan is forbidden. Only members of the immediate family may touch

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1k,
Sociological Background

RELIGION

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

• 771 The dominant, yet nameless, religion which exists in Formosa today is a system of worship, derived from such diverse sources as Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, each of which has contributed some of its teachings and practices to the system, intermixed with folk beliefs. The religion is polytheistic and has its roots in the worship of Nature and one's ancestors. Most of the people on the island do not belong to a single religion but worship the gods of the three religions. Their religion, thus, is inclusive and tolerant. In almost every Formosan Chinese household an altar may be found in the central hall. On the altar, beside the tablets of ancestors, the images or symbols of several gods are displayed. Among them are usually Kuan-yin [Goddess of Mercy], a Buddhist goddess; Sheng-mu or Matsu [the Holy Mother of Heaven], Tsao-chün [the God of the Hearth], Fu-te-cheng-shen [the God of Wealth and Virtue] -- these three being derived from the Confucian system; and T'ien-kung [the Jade Emperor or Supreme God of Heaven], a Taoist god. In addition, each house has a Men-shen

771 [Diety of the Door].[1] There is also among the Formosan Chinese another common object of worship, Ch'eng-huang-yeh [the Judicial God], who is believed to have judicial and policing powers over the living and the dead. In essence, these folk-beliefs constitute the religion of the island; it is estimated that about 7,000,000 people (about 70 per cent of the population) subscribe to them in one way or another. Wide latitude seems to exist between strict surface adherence and true belief among the younger generation. Young people and urban intellectuals are less enthusiastic about the religion and follow it only as a matter of family observance. But it is still very influential among women, older men, and the less-educated. More than 3,000 temples of various gods existed throughout the

1. Fukutaro Masuda, Taiwan hontojin no shukyo [Religion of Taiwan Islanders], Tokyo, 1935, p. 47. Classification of these gods into certain philosophical schools such as Confucianism and Taoism may appear arbitrary. But it is done so in this source probably because the gods of the folk religion tend to be ascribed to one school or another, by the general public.

period of Japanese rule.[2] The number of temples has not decreased; since the Restoration in 1945, many temples have been repaired and new ones have been built.

On Formosa the faithful of other religions are numerically unimportant. There were only 41,000 "true" Buddhists among the Formosan Chinese[3] in 1942. In 1954, there were about 34,000 Catholics with 126 churches, and 80,000 Protestants (about 4,600 of them Presbyterians) with about 600 churches.[4] There were about 900 Taoists[5] on Formosa in 1955. These various religious groups constitute less than 2 per cent of the total

2. Taiwan Provincial Government, Statistical Summary of Taiwan for the Past Fifty-one Years, Taipei, 1946, Table 507.

3. Ibid., Table 510. This seems to be the latest figure available on the number of Buddhists on the island.

4. China News Press, Chung-hua Nien-pao, 1954 [China Annual, 1954], Vol. II, Taipei, 1955, pp. 103-106.

5. There were about 900 Taoist believers on the island in 1955. Chung-yang Jih-pao [Central Daily News], Taipei, Oct. 7, 1955.

1797 There is a Catholic hospital in Kaohsiung and another in Lotung. Many of the missions give time to Bible classes, English classes, and kindergartens. The increase in the number of Catholic converts has been most remarkable. There were fewer than 10,000 Catholics in 1941, and the number had increased[9] to more than 34,000 in 1954. While many Protestant denominations have been established in the last ten years, the number of their adherents has increased relatively little -- about 70,000 in 1942, to slightly over 80,000 in 1954.

There seems to be no open conflict between the tolerant native religion and Christianity, nor any objection to the introduction and expansion of Christianity. It has been noted that some non-Christian families celebrate Christmas and many Christian families continue to celebrate traditional Chinese festivals.[10]

II. THE CHARACTER OF FOLK BELIEF

• 771 The Chinese have "concerned themselves less with the hereafter than with the proper

9. China News Press, op. cit., p. 103.
10. A.F. Raper and others, Urban and Industrial Taiwan, Taipei, Foreign Operations Administration and National Taiwan University, 1954, p. 334.

conduct of affairs and attainment of happiness in the here and now."[11] Unlike the Hindus, the "Chinese are not a passionately religious people preoccupied with a spiritual quest." However, the daily life of the Formosan Chinese is tremendously influenced by religion, although they worship in order to resolve the problems of the here and now. Everything that is useful for living, no matter whether it is native or foreign, rational or naive, is generously absorbed and preserved. Naturally their system of religion has no rigid principles, they adhere to no single discipline of teaching and practice, and their idea of the godhead is not clearly defined.

The Formosan Chinese religion has been resolved, in the main, from the material needs of life. When the Chinese came to Formosa, they carried with them the image of Matsu, the patron goddess of navigation, and the images of other local gods as patrons and protectors. Sometimes they carried consecrated incense as a symbol of the gods. Before steam navigation, it was dangerous to cross the Formosa Strait.

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11. "Religion in the Land of Confucius," Life, Vol. 38, No. 14, April 4, 1955, pp. 44-84.

771 After the Chinese arrived in Formosa, they were subject to epidemics, bandits, and raiding parties of aborigines. The patron gods were their only refuge.

Religion in those early days of settlement also had a social function. Immediately after a settlement was made, a temple was built. Intimate co-operation was absolutely necessacy in the new settlement, and shared beliefs gave a basis for mutual endeavor. The temple was their community center for discussions and decisions on public affairs. Once an argument had been settled in the presence of their gods, the agreement was binding and adherence was assured.

For the Formosan Chinese, everything that man cannot control is attributed to the work of supernatural force. This force governs every aspect of human life. All natural phenomena are deified, and ancestors, sages, virtuous women, and historical personalities are often given the status of gods. In heaven, there is the supreme god, the Jade Emperor. Under him, in successive ranks are the gods of heaven, of earth, and of water; the gods of the seasons, the god of the five elements (water, wood, earth, gold, and fire); the god of the thunder, of the lightning, of the wind, of the clouds, and of the rain; the gods of the mountains and the rivers -- and so on. Each branch of trade

771 has its god; there are patron gods for pharmacists, rice traders, carpenters, tailors, musicians, etc. There are household deities for the door, the well, and the hearth. For child-bearing and child-upbrining there are specific gods. There are gods of longevity and happiness. In short, there is a god to correspond to each and every human need. It is inevitable that beliefs as general as these result in superstitious practices.

775 The conception of a realm of the dead (Yin-chien) as contrasted with the world of the living (Yang-chien) includes a hell after death, judgment, reward, or punishment, and transmigration into another living form as punishment or entry into paradise as reward. It is generally believed that a person after his death will go to the realm of the dead where Ch'eng-huang-yeh [the Judicial God] will send him to Yen-lo-wang [the King of Hell]. The King will try each case with impartial care, sending those who have done good deeds to the Paradise of the West (the Buddhist Paradise) and give adequate punishment to those who have done evil. The seriousness of the offense determines whether the person is to be re-born as a new person or as a lower creature, say, a water buffalo or an insect. The punishments imposed are cruel, and those who have sinned may be boiled in oil, cut in half, or have their tongues

787 adhere to the folk-religion. With the advance of science and Western education, the belief in communication with the spirits of the dead and the various forms of taboo will lose much of their force. However, their influence on the religious life of the people in Formosa still seems to remain far stronger than that of Christianity.

IV. GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARD RELIGION

• 771 Since the establishment of the Republic of China, the government has assumed an attitude of "non-interference" toward religious practices. Confucianism, which is a system of ethnical principles rather than a religion, receives official support and encouragement in matters of education and propaganda. On the birth day of Confucius, heads of central and local governments become chief priests in worshiping and commemorating the great sage.

Of the greater number of government officials who have begun to observe Christian services, some may have done so, in part, because the wish for co-operation with the West, particularly with the United States, is growing. Church attendance, however, is by no means widespread.

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• 771 The wartime austerity campaign launched by the government has, to a certain extent, imposed measures against waste and extravagance during local festivals and other annual religious rites. However, these restrictions have had little effect on traditional religious practices, to which the people stubbornly cling for solace.